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Letter dated 20 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to inform you on behalf of my Government that the Australian Defence Force — in association with the Armed Forces of the United States of America and the United Kingdom — engaged in military action in Iraq on 20 March 2003. The action is continuing.

The action follows a long history of non-cooperation by Iraq with the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and numerous findings by the Security Council that Iraq has failed to comply with its disarmament obligations under Security Council resolutions. In its resolution 1441 (2002), the Council recognized that Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction constitutes a threat to international peace and security, that Iraq has failed, in clear violation of its obligations, to disarm and that in consequence Iraq is in material breach of the conditions for the ceasefire at the end of hostilities in 1991 laid down by the Council in its resolution 687 (1991). Military action was undertaken consistent with resolutions 678 (1990), 687 (1991) and 1441 (2002) only when it became apparent that there was no other way of achieving compliance by Iraq.

The objective of the action is to secure compliance by Iraq with its disarmament obligations as laid down by the Council. All military action will be limited to the minimum measures necessary to secure this objective. Operations will be conducted in accordance with the international laws of armed conflict. Great care will be taken to confine damage to military targets and to avoid civilian casualties.

I would be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) John **Dauth**

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